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FRENCH DEFENSE OFFICIALS VISIT BALTIC STATES. A delegation from the French Defense Ministry's Strategic Affairs Department, headed by Deputy Director General Alain Faupin, began a tour of the Baltic States on 6 February. BNS reported the following day. It held discussions with Lithuanian parliament deputies in Vilnius on national defense concepts and cooperation between the Baltic States. On 7 and 8 February, the delegation visits Riga for meetings with representatives of the Latvian Defense Ministry, the National Defense Academy, and State Presidential Adviser on Military Issues Col. Dainis Turlais. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

INFLATION IN ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA. The Estonian State Statistics Office has announced that the consumer price index in January increased by 3.5% over December, BNS reported on 7 February. Prices of goods rose by 2.9% (food by 3.8% and manufactured items by 1.6%), while the price of services increased by 4.2%. Meanwhile, the Lithuanian Statistics Department reported that inflation in January reached 5.7%, mainly owing to a 8.7% increase in food prices. Prices for tobacco and alcohol increased by 2.7%, for transportation and communication by 2.5%, and for housing expenses by 2.2%. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.